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[p. 13a]

197 Probably no group of Tarascans has great difficulty in understanding any other group. As Tarascan has not been subjected to intensive grammatical analysis, thus far no affiliations for the language have been seriously proposed.

105 To summarize the discussion, the Tarascans appear to be fairly typical of the plateau Indians of Central Mexico in type, but they speak a unique language. Both anciently and today

[text continues on top of p. 13b]

TECHNOLOGY

EXPLOITATIVE ACTIVITIES

128 In this section are described the techniques of the Cherán Tarascans for the exploitation of the environment. With a few exceptions, manufacturing processes, the uses to which the products are put, and the economic system into which they enter are discussed in later sections.

COLLECTING

222 *Plants.*—No food plants are collected regularly. Recourse is sometimes had to edible greens in times of starvation or as an occasional means of bringing variety into the diet. Most useful plants, except medicinal herbs, exist in the town in virtually a semidomesticated state. This is particularly true of the [263] most commonly used plants such as kulántro (*silantro*),[2] the most frequently employed herb for flavoring food. Similarly, *manzanilla*, [278] probably the most generally used medicinal herb, is to be found in every garden. Discussion of these plants can therefore best be deferred to the discussions of medicine and the house gardens.

A small wild maguey growing in the mountains and in the *malpais* (lava flows) is collected from November to May. [252] The heart is roasted in pit ovens and sold.

222 412 One minor commercial enterprise, formerly of some importance, is collecting *zais de paja*, the roots of a coarse grass. The roots are cut off and carried to Cherán, where they are carefully laid out in rows on sunny, dry days. After drying, they are tied in bundles for sale

[104]

[2] Tarascan words are in Roman and Spanish words are in Italic unless they are in frequent English usage. Spanish words with special local meanings are in quotation marks.

[text continues to middle of p. 13b]

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232 common. If wounds are bound, carefully washed lard mixed with sugar may be applied or wet dressings may be used, dampened at frequent intervals with salt water.

Rabies is believed to be caused by the bite of some other animal, by inadequate food, or by heat. There is no cure.

Dysentery, *"posición,"* in horses and burros is believed to be caused by cold or *"salitre,"* a very salty mineral-bearing earth. The animal is fed pills of coffee, lemon, and bicarbonate of soda.

"Onia" is caused by overwork, but the symptoms were not recorded. Treatment is bleeding the side of the neck and rest. (In general,
[753] overwork is regarded as an important cause of sickness.)

Sore feet result from the feet becoming full of blood. The bottom of the foot is bled and the animal must rest until well.

"Roncha" is a disease caused by mosquito bites; if it is not cured within 24 hours, the animal usually dies. Symptoms and treatment were not recorded.

"Pirojon" is very dangerous and kills in 24 hours. It is believed to be caused by mosquitoes or flies that have bitten a dead animal already putrefying. One curer burns the bites with a magnifying glass.

Evil eye, *malojo*, may affect animals that refuse to eat. There is no cure. The best thing is to sell the animal to the man who cast the evil eye (at his price usually); the animal then recovers.

[925] Bats are reported to bite animals at night and make them bleed. Nothing is done to prevent this. As it is said bats never bite humans, and as Cherán probably is above the range of vampire bats, the report may be folklore.

MANUFACTURING PROCESSES

In the previous sections were described the
● 128 technological processes which involve the exploitation of the environment and the extraction therefrom of raw materials. The present section will describe techniques by which the raw materials are processed and made ready for consumption. Obviously, such classifications must be somewhat elastic. No doubt, good reasons could be advanced against including domesticated animals under exploitative activi-

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.34a]

128 ties. Neither are descriptions of dress or house use entirely appropriate under the heading of manufacturing processes. Nevertheless, there is a certain cultural or associative logic involved which would be violated by too rigid adherence to the literal meaning of categories.

CERAMICS

339 [323] No native ceramic industry exists in Cherán. Pottery is not made, but in 1940 two men, both non-Tarascans, made roofing tile and brick.

[413]

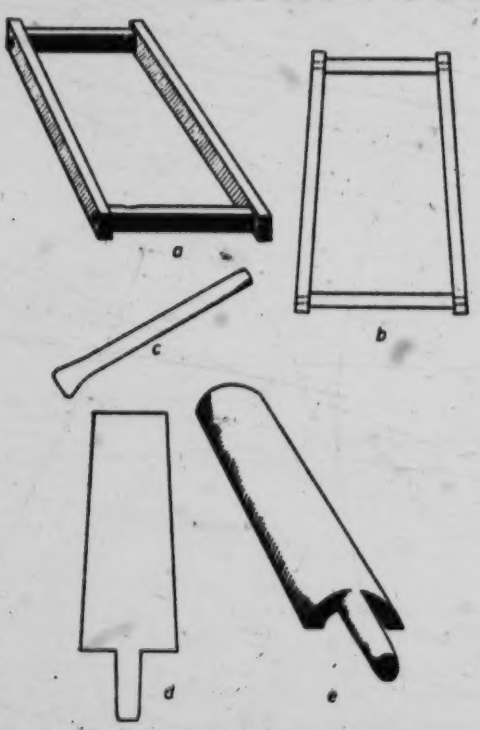

FIGURE 5.—Tilemaker's implements. *a*, Perspective view of the mold. *b*, Direct view of the mold to show proportions and the shape, which is narrower at one end than the other. *c*, Wooden chisel or knife used to loosen clay from mold if necessary (length about 18 inches with other artifacts in proportion). *d*, Outline of the form for tiles. *e*, Perspective view of the form for tiles. The mold is filled with clay and the top smoothed. The mold is then lifted up, leaving the clay on a bench top. The clay is then slid onto the form to receive the curved shape of the tile. After a few minutes drying, the unfired tile is slipped off the form onto the floor to complete the drying process.

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.476]

333 scaffolding, and string to line up the walls. Perhaps a dozen men do masonry, mostly as a secondary occupation. Work is usually charged for on the basis of square meters of wall.

305 *Barbers.*—Most men in Cherán now have their hair cut by a barber. There are two barbers in town regularly, and more come to town during fiestas. The Cherán barbers also visit nearby towns during fiestas. During the middle of the week they have little trade.

Formerly men cut each other's hair for nothing in the bull ring on Sundays, using only scissors. The barbers have clippers as well and also razors for shaving, although there is not much demand for the latter. One barber is not a native; the other learned the trade in the United States.

312 *Water carriers.*—In most households the
482 women bring the water from the fountain or aqueduct in ollas carried on their shoulders.
462 However, for any commercial use (*nixtamal* mill, masonry, the threshing machine) water is carried by men. In addition, there is one man who makes his living carrying water for storekeepers, whose wives may be too busy helping in the store, and for a few families who are somewhat Mestizoized and the husband has decided the work is too hard for the women.

Interestingly enough, the men's method of water carrying is entirely different from that of the women. Men carry water in two 5-gallon cans suspended from the two ends of a pole which is supported on the shoulder. This rigid dichotomy is observed even in families where one of the men or boys brings the bulk of the water. If the women need to bring additional water, they always use ollas and make several trips.

FOOD PROCESSING AND DIET

128 Consideration of food processing in this section is confined primarily to household activities. Commercial processing of food for sale, such as baking, butchering, and ice cream making, will be considered later.

251 The storage of food is confined primarily to maize, wheat, beans, and broadbeans (*habas*). Except for small supplies for immediate use, stores are kept in the house, usually in the loft. Maize is stored on the cob. Wheat, beans, and similar seeds are stored in gunny sacks or in

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

264 serving and preparing tortillas is over. Ordinarily, the only utensils are spoons and these are used only when coffee is served. Food is taken in the fingers or, more commonly, in a piece of tortilla.

264 527 In fiestas, separation of sexes is more pronounced. The men are seated in two rows on beams or planks. Each is served a bowl of čurípo. Tortillas, tamales, salt, and water are placed at convenient intervals between the rows. Male children are served later in the same way. All serving outside the cooking place is done by men. Women and female children eat apart with less formality, often in the cooking place.

271 The only possible trace of ceremonial habits relating to eating is the habit of always leaving a little water when drinking. This is poured on the ground after drinking. No reasons were advanced for this procedure.

184 264 In Mestizoized Chilchota, according to Silvia Rendón, men are always served first. At weddings, however, unmarried girls are served

[text continues on top of p.58b]

ECONOMICS

128 The techniques of raw material production, manufacting processes, and utilization of products have been discussed in the preceding pages. Under the heading "Economics" I wish now to consider problems of production, consumption, and exchange of goods and services apart from the technologies involved. Such a separation is artificial, although perhaps no more so than is the segregation of any two aspects of a culture, but separate consideration is suggested both by the complexity of the subject and by the tendency in many ethnographic studies to consider discussion of technology to be a sufficient treatment of economics. Special discussion of economic problems also seems desirable in view of the present great interest in altering the basic economics and living standards of large areas of the world and the long-continued Mexican efforts to incorporate native groups more fully into the national economy.

437 The study of Tarascan economy is facilitated by the fact that many of the exchanges of goods and services are made on a money basis. Moreover, the convenience of money as a measure of value has so impressed the Tarascans that ex-

[text continues on middle of p.58b]

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426 In addition to the above-described types of loans, there are also loans at interest for which normally no security is offered. These loans are usually made by persons within the village and rarely exceed $100 in amount. Interest is normally 10 percent per annum. In some cases it is stipulated that the debt is to be canceled upon the death of the debtor. In other instances the debt becomes a charge against [428] the estate of the debtor. If the possessions of the debtor at death are insufficient to pay the debt, it is not transmitted to his sons. However, according to Pedro Chávez, the sons probably would make every effort to pay such a debt because of the strongly held belief that a person [775] dying with debts cannot rest in peace until the debts are paid.

All transactions involving loans are in writing, although they are not registered at the *municipio*.

COSTS OF PRODUCTION AND INCOME

433 Some further insight into production prob-
434 lems may be gained by detailed studies of
128 specific activities. These data throw light upon the relative profitability of such activities and also provide information on income. Not all activities are covered in the ensuing discussion, nor are the data equally reliable in each category. Such activities as witchcraft or midwifery are not included; the labor factor in beekeeping or fruit growing is impossible to ascertain. An activity followed by only a few individuals merits less attention than one followed by many.

Not only is the treatment of topics uneven, but the income data are subject to misinterpretation. It must be emphasized that virtually no one in Cherán, except a few "rich" farmers or storekeepers, has only one occupation. Consequently, any effort to establish annual income on the basis of figures in this section would be grossly misleading. Finally, it should be noted that not all the activities discussed below are productive. Because of the problem of income, I have considered a number of "service" occupations in this section.

AGRICULTURE

243 *Maize.*—Data on farm production were diffi-
433 cult to obtain. On no other subject is there so
124

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
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[p.91a]

181 with the larger national economy. Some of the
55% deficiencies of this report spring from the fact that study of these larger economic systems has not yet been made. It is apparent that the Cherán system functions in considerable part as a money economy and that in many respects it is essentially a European type economy.

Nevertheless, there are some differences of possible significance. Despite the fact the economy may be studied in monetary terms, wealth concepts do not revolve wholly about money and its values. Land itself has a surprisingly low money value, yet it is the major basis for evaluating individual wealth. Maize also occupies a higher position than its money value would indicate. Money is valued after maize, not before it, and the man who has money but no maize is apt to be regarded as

[text continues on top of p. 91b]

THE COMMUNITY

128 The community of Cherán may be viewed in several ways. There are, first of all, the physical attributes of the town, its layout, subdivisions, and boundaries. There are the objective characteristics of the people who occupy the area, their numbers, demographic characteristics, and groupings. Yet other aspects of the community are the bonds which hold it together and the groupings within which the individual functions as a part of the larger entity—the family, the kinship group, the various institutions such as the *compadrazgo*. The organization of the community politically is also of great importance: the structure of government, its management, organization, functions, and obligations. Finally, there looms important in Cherán the ceremonial and religious organization. Although logically forming a part of this section, discussion of the latter is deferred for a separate treatment.

THE MUNICIPIO

632 Cherán is, first of all, a *municipio*, an admin-
634 istrative unit, smaller than the usual county in the United States but having somewhat similar characteristics. The ordinary *municipio* in Michoacán consists of a *cabecera* or head town, somewhat similar to our county seat in functions. In most Tarascan *municipios* about half

[text continues on middle of p. 91b]

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825 back where it enters, but no further beliefs
787 could be discovered.

An animal said to be unique in Cherán is the *hachoque* or ečékurita. It resembles a lizard and is spotted black and white. It lives in corners, inside the walls of houses, or in the stone pillars. It does not bite or injure people, but it is believed to suckle the breasts of nursing mothers while they are sleeping, taking all the milk. The animal cannot be killed with blows or by cutting it up, for the pieces reunite. Only by burning it with coals can it be killed.

823 A very clever man once went up on San Marcos and struck the mountain. Water poured out, creating a *barranca*, and continued for several days until the plain west of town was covered several feet deep. The priest then went up the mountain and ordered the water to stop, which it did.

821 Against hurricanes and hail, a cross is made
263 in the patio or the street, of ashes, taken from
789 the household fireplace. Salt is not put in the fire for this purpose.

[text continues on top of p. 163b]

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

128 In the preceding sections the culture of Cherán has been treated primarily from its technological and institutional aspects. The position of individuals and their activities have been discussed, it is true, but the orientation has been toward generalized and institutionalized activities. In the following pages will be discussed the activities which are more directly individual in character. This is not to say that many of these activities are not institutionalized; certainly the wedding ceremonies, for example, are quite as institutionalized in character as the *mayordomía*. Nevertheless, the wedding is more closely related to the development of individual personal relationships. Emphasis in succeeding pages will be upon the crisis periods in the individual and upon the developmental and behavioral patterns in the intervals between crises.

It will be obvious in the following discussion that treatment of the role of the individual in the culture and the impact of the culture upon the individual is very incomplete. Particular weaknesses are apparent in the discussion of infancy

[text continues on middle of p. 163b]

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789 The crosses put on top of houses are to
821 protect them from lightning or whirlwinds.

If people swim in Las Pilas, a small pond
481 northeast of town, they will sink after swim-
823 ming out a certain distance. Horses will drown there also.

821 Eclipses are thought the work of some higher power and that nothing can be done about them. There is no fear of eclipses, though, except in connection with childbirth. Some believe eclipses result from struggles between sun, moon, and earth. The defeated element is said to devour part of the foetus, causing adhesions between various parts and the womb and making birth difficult. No beliefs could be discovered about the stars. Indeed, informants insisted that there were no names for the stars and that people did not distinguish one from the other. This is unusual if true.

Mention should be made here of beliefs in the evil eye and in *los aires*, "the airs or winds." They will be discussed in connection with disease concepts and curing.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CULTURE

128 and childhood and in the part of women. These lacks are inevitable, not only from the shortness of the study, but from the special attitudes in Cherán which closed so many avenues of approach to male investigators. Material collected by Rendón is very helpful, but it is fragmentary and insufficient. It does show, though, that women investigators could secure many data otherwise difficult to collect.

BIRTH

842 Children are generally desired in Cherán, and motherhood is regarded as normal and expectable. There is a clear idea of the physiological causation of pregnancy, and normally no means are taken to avoid it. Men are said to prefer boys and women to prefer girls, but whatever the sex, both parents usually welcome the child and wish many, and childbirth appears to cause minimal emotional disturbances, although they are not lacking. Although no accurate data were available, informants did not believe there were more than six or eight women in Cherán who had not borne children. Some said that

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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historically those segments of our Western civilization among which industrialism did not arise (peasantry and colonial peoples), and among which its influences were latest to act. Thus, although in many basic economic, social and religious aspects the Tarascans are incorporated into Western society and must be considered part of it, they still keep many traits and institutions which characterize their subcultures as more similar in many respects to the primitive than to our civilization.

* * *

The present paper is an attempt to present the relation between local and national cultures as seen in one aspect of culture, in this case religion. The problem is to see how changes in the economic and social structure of Mexico in general and the Tarascan area in particular affect the development of Tarasan folk religion. National processes such as the loss of communal ownership of land, the separation of Church and State, the capitalist development of Mexico, the Mexican agrarian revolution, the anticlerical movement and the rise of a militant Catholic movement among the peasantry will be discussed in their local manifestations and their effect on religion.

The economic structure of the peasant communities will be outlined first in order to provide a socio-economic background to our problem. The type of village community which is based on communal ownership of land — a type which was formed during colonial times by a blending of Spanish and Indian institutions — will be described first. The formation of large private estates *(haciendas)* from early colonial times on, and the abolition of communal ownership of land (1857-1910) impoverished the communities and increased the differences in wealth among the villagers. During the Mexican Revolution (1910 on) groups of peasants organized to obtain land from neighboring estates. In most Tarascan towns, which had no such estates in their neighborhood, these agraristas, lacking haciendas, seized properties from richer villagers or from formerly communal lands. Thus a new privileged minority was formed. The majority of the villages reacted against these reformers and in most cases won power in the local administrations. (Chapter 2.)

The main traits of the folk religion, the system of financing the cult, and the close relation between government and local organization of the cult will be examined in

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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order to show how the changes discussed in Chapter 2 brought about the decay of the traditional organization of religious festivals. The heavy burden of financing the traditional cult had been a factor in hastening the impoverishment of some villagers. The agraristas were anticlerical and abolished the cult. In this they were fostered by the anti-religious policy of the government. The reaction against the agraristas, on the other hand, has been militantly Catholic, but the decline of religious folk festivals and of the body of officials organizing them still continues, although this reaction occurs under the guise of more orthodox Catholicism and is supported by the Church. (Chapter 3.)

The social content of the religious ideology as expressed in concepts of good and evil will be discussed in Chapter 4. The values sanctioned in religion are to some extent those peculiar to the folk culture, for instance, proper family relations. To the extent that they sanction national institutions, religious ideas and folklore sanction adherance to the Church and to private property. The religious tinge of political factions is apparent in the use of traditional lore by the Catholics in trying to prove the wickedness of the opposite party. Thus they use religion as an ideology in order to further their cause in the same way as they lean on the Church as an institution in order to support their social policies.

The question of belief will also be discussed. A more conservative attitude characterized by total belief in religious ideas and myths corresponds to the folk level of culture. The general trend, however, is toward disbelief in the content of folk ideas and acceptance of outside (national) authority (i. e., of the Church or schools). Political allegiance influences this tendency. While some anticlerical individuals doubt basic beliefs of the Catholic religion, the militant Catholics show a trend away from the folk beliefs under the acceptance of a more orthodox Catholicism.

A summary of conclusions will be given in Chapter 5.

* * *

Chapters 2 and 3 are based mainly on published material providing some historical perspectives, and only partly on field work. Chapter 4 is based almost exclusively on field work. As practically nothing on the subject discussed in this chapter appears in historical sources, historical interpreta-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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128 tion when attempted is for the most part inferential: seeing what older stages survive and how they are represented in modern material.

121 A discussion of Indian-Spanish acculturation in the sixteenth century is not attempted. Taken as a point of departure is the already more or less stable Indian colonial culture of the so-called Indian republics at the end of the eighteenth century. Our main source of information 127 is a 1789 official report on Michoacan, giving good information on the economics and political-religious organization of Indian towns. Part of it has been published[6] and another part has been used in the typewritten copy appended to Osbourn, 1941. References in other works are ably summarized and quoted by León.[7] Much more material undoubtedly can be recovered from archives in Mexico City and Michoacan. An important kind of document are the *pindecuarios*, lists of the towns' financial obligations and their officials for every religious celebration.[8] They provide information transitional to the nineteenth century. A good picture of Tarascan cul- 114 ture in the late-nineteenth century, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, is provided by León, Lumholtz and Starr.[9] Modern material also throws light on preceding periods, providing a fuller description of what in older sources is barely sketched.

Among the post-revolutionary studies, Sáenz[10] shows great insight into the political conflict in La Cañada villages. Simpson's *Ejido* includes as one of his case studies the history of the land reforms in one Tarascan community. The names used are fictitious but it is evident that the area is the Zacapu swamp and the village in question is most probably Tarejero.[11] Mendieta y Núñez summarizes the existing literature on the Tarascans from pre-Spanish to modern times. His monograph is based primarily on published sources but contains some original material. The chapters on the agrarian problem by Fausto Galván Campos are particularly useful.[12]

122 Practically all field work in the present period has been done as part of a cooperative project of American and Mexican in- 114

6. Estado . . . , 1944.
7. León, 1906.
8. Fragments of such documents have been published in Rivera, 1868, 330-34 (for the village of Coeneo in 1767); Ocampo, 1900, 388-90 (for San Francisco in 1816) and León, 1906, 425-437 (for Pichátaro, no date).
9. León, 1906; Lumholtz, 1902; Starr, 1901 and 1908.
10. Sáenz, 1936.
11. Simpson, 1937, chapter xxv.
12. Mendieta y Núñez, 1940.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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The Indian Village Communities of Mexico

128 The starting point of our discussion will be the Indian village communities formed after the Spanish conquest by a blend of Spanish and Indian institutions. These communities will be described in their general traits, common to all of central Mexico, in order to provide a picture of the national scene, and also because concrete illustrative material for the Tarascans is on some points unavailable at the present time.

175 621 Before the Spanish conquest, most of the Indians in the central valleys of Mexico, including the Tarascans, were organized in communities, their members tied together both by kinship bonds and by owning land in common.[1] Such communities were called *calpulli* in Nahuatl and *calpul*, *barrio*, or *pueblo* in Spanish sources.

The larger political units were formed by a number of calpulli brought together under a common government by a ruling nobility.

175 565 The Indians of the calpulli, or commoners, were subordinate to the nobility.[2] The nobles held the high positions in government, war and religion. The commoners had to pay tribute to them either in kind or in work. This labor was employed for public works or in tilling the land attached to offices held by the nobles.

[423] [427] In central Mexico the nobles could own private land which was worked by a third social class of tenants (Nahuatl, *mayeque*). There is no conclusive evidence that this type of landownership existed in Michoacan,[3] although it is highly probable.[4]

[563] After the conquest, the Spaniards replaced the Indian nobility as the dominant class in society. The commoners' tribute now went to the Spanish state or to individual conquistadores (encomenderos). The Spaniards also owned land privately in contrast to the communal ownership of Indian communities. They engaged in agriculture (mainly in cash crops such as sugar), cattle raising, and mining. They held all governmental positions and to

1. For the Tarascans, see Relación, 1869, 15, 21, 29, 53.
2. For Michoacan, see Relación, 1869, 13ff.; Zurita, 1891, 166.
3. Zurita, 1891, 166.
4. Relación, 1861, 24.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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775 tend to identify them with devils or to say that the Devil is behind all that.
778 Doomed evil souls can be invoked, too, in witchcraft. Thus, those who died in ac-
754 cidents or were murdered are prayed to so that they will kill one's enemy. This
775 takes place at the stone heap or in front of the cross, if it has been taken away. Also, in one formula for divination, the brave spirits are invoked, and two are mentioned in particular, those of Chavez García, a bandit, and Zapata (agrarista leader).

Religious Ideology and Folklore as Expression of the Folk Culture

A. Values Sanctioned in Ideology

● 128 An outline of Tarascan folklore and main religious concepts has been given in terms of the ideas of good and evil, which seem to pervade the entire body of belief. In order to discuss the social implications of this ideology, we shall sum up what is considered good or evil in all the elements which are mentioned in our collection. We shall do so from the point of view of evil elements since this is the exposition to which our material seems to lend itself more readily.

821 Harmful natural elements are considered bad and are related to the Devil.
776 They either are caused by him or are special manifestations of him. Thus the tornado is a water-snake, a devilish creature in itself. When the Devil wants to take some one away, he does so in this form. Similarly, a whirlwind is a lame devil, his limping explaining his circular motion.

Hail is equally bad and is closely connected with the idols or 'saints' of the heathens. The same association is found in some cases in lightning, although this shares also the good character of rain. The
[823] volcano was made by the Devil, as something bad which only he can do, even if following orders from God. When the volcano is personified, it is the same as the Devil.

183 The material which is of more interest to our subject, however, is not that referring to nature but to social behavior. An account of what is considered bad behavior will show what institutions and what social order are sanctioned by the Tarascan ideology.

For reasons of convenience, we classify the modes of behavior which are considered bad into (*a*) behavior against the mores of the whole population, and (*b*) be-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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5

CONCLUSIONS

128 The arrangement followed in the presentation of this material was imposed by the nature of the data. Sources for the different periods or for the national or local scenes were unequal. Thus it was necessary to examine each topic separately (economics and politics, cult organization, ideology) as it changed during the period considered rather than to follow, through successive historical stages, all the topics of Tarascan culture under discussion. A presentation of the latter sort will be attempted in this summary of conclusions.

185 177 For a point of departure we took the folk culture of the Indian communities formed during the colonial period by a blend of Spanish and Indian cultures. This culture is typical of the colonial period but its basic elements often survived into much later times, and even to the present in marginal areas. These communities were integrated with the economy of Mexico by paying tribute (or taxes), by the market, and by providing laborers for enterprises outside the local community. A great degree of economic autonomy, however, provided in each town a basis for the distinctive folk culture. It was characterized by communal landownership, agricultural techniques based on local resources and requiring the cooperation of all the villagers, the importance of household crafts, little differentiation as to wealth among the villagers, and production, for the most part, for consumption within the village or for the local market.

105 621 The local government organs were under the ultimate control of higher national authorities, but had a wide range of autonomy.

771 Catholicism, the state religion, was also the religion of the local community, and the priest was supported by the village with the sanction of the State. But an important part of religion was peculiar to the [796] local folk culture: unorganized rites around technological and life cycle activities, and also what we call folk Catholicism, folk acts of the cult, mainly festivals to the saints. A number of officers sponsoring and organizing these festivals were closely connected with the local government. 794 Cult financing was provided for by the produce or communal property devoted to

6: Friedrich E-5 (1955-1956) 1958 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Zacapu

A TARASCAN CACICAZGO
Structure and Function

Paul W. Friedrich

66 CACIQUISMO is a type of informal Hispano-American government operating to enforce the partially arbitrary control of an association of individuals under one leader, the cacique, a term derived through Spanish from the Arawak (Alegria, 1952). Caciquismo is a largely unstudied and partially covert feature of Mexican culture. It has long been dubbed a "national social problem."

A cacicazgo is a concrete case of caciquismo. Our primary reference is to the cacicazgo in a village, here called Durazno, which is part of Tarascan society, a group of some seventy thousand Indians living in the cool green mountains of northwestern Michoacan, Mexico. Salient traits of Durazno culture are: a population of fourteen hundred, bilingualism, plow and hoe agriculture, corn as a cash crop, adobe housing, a corn-beans-chili diet, a total absence of handicrafts, and a leading role in the radical, anti-clerical politics of the state. The ejido land, won in 1924, is administered by the community and worked in plots by families of socially equal peasants. The generalisations that follow are based on a detailed description and analysis of the culture for the following historical periods: first, the indigenous culture of 1885; second, a troubled time following the desiccation by Spanish capitalists of an adjacent, life-giving, marshy lake (1900-21), coupled with the rising control of a regional landlord-mestizo-clerical faction; third, a period covering the struggle for the rich, black soil of the ejido (1921-26), with the crystallization of an agrarian cacicazgo; fourth, a period of twenty-two years of sanguinary contention between changing factions (1926-48); finally, a period of increasingly centralized control under the present-day cacique and his oligarchy. The methods and concepts of ethnology, political science, and sociology were severally employed. The political culture of Durazno was set within the total context of village life and the larger structures of area, state, and nation (Friedrich, 1957).[1]

The principal structural units of Durazno culture have definite and often discrete political functions. The primary relations between men within the nuclear family enjoin active political loyalty that has practically never been broken. (The one known case in over fifty years in which brothers sided opposite factions is easily understandable on psychological grounds.) The father-son-brother block is the minimal and the most cohesive political unit of which larger structures are composed; intrigues must be conducted in terms of these blocks because every political act automatically involves all the primary relatives of both the nuclear families of the individual concerned (Levi-Strauss, 1945). The father in Durazno culture leads the nuclear political block. The inner core of a cacicazgo always includes the primary relatives of the cacique. The cacique leads this inner core and plays the role of an actual or would-be patriarch over the entire village. Older, charismatic caciques are called "tata," or "father," by the Tarascans. Thus the nuclear family has political functions in the village at large, and these functions are especially important in defining the cacicazgo.

A second structural block in Durazno politics is the ejidal family, a group of one or

8: Kaplan E-5 (1948)1953 NU34 Tarasco NU34
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in communities other than Paracho, places which are culturally considerably more Indian than is Paracho.

When we inquired into the question of ethnic identification, it soon became apparent that the concept of biological race was not important in the town. Members of the populace generally regard themselves either as "sons of the pueblo" or as having come to Paracho from elsewhere. Consequently when the question was put, "To what race do your parents belong?" responses ranged from "I don't know" through "They came from here" or "They were born here" to "We are all people of Paracho" or even "All the 'Romeros' are one family, they all belong to the same race." The question was therefore worded either, "Are your parents native (*natural*), Mestizo or what?" or, "Are your parents Indians, Spanish (*de razon*) or what?" and — usually in one of these two forms — the question was put to 256 people.[4] It was our purpose to standardize the question, to secure comparable results, and yet to leave the way open for free elaboration.

The field team consisted of a physical anthropologist, the able field assistant, Prof. Pablo Valesquez G., who conducted the interviews connected with the mensurational part of the study, and the social anthropologist. The responses to the question were noted as heard, together with such supplementary explanations as the informants occasionally proffered. This record was kept independently of that made by the field assistant and both have been utilized.

Two hundred and eighty-nine of the parents were reported as being Indian and 167 as being Mestizo. Although almost all persons were able and willing to make the judgment it did not always carry much conviction and one got the impression that emotional involvement was usually totally lacking.

The series may be further analysed to note the frequency with which children report similarities or differences in ethnic identification between parents. In the great preponderance of instances children reported both parents to be of the same ethnic background, either both Mestizo or both Indian. This regularity of parallel responses is at least in part derived from the nature of the formal interview, where it is easier to give the same answer to the same question about two individuals than it is to consider the question twice. It is interesting, however, to note that where "mixed" parentage was mentioned, a significantly larger number of respondents reported their fathers as Mestizos and their mothers as Indian than did the reverse. The more frequent mention of Indian mothers may represent an overt expression of a realization that the fathers — or rather, the men in general — are the ones who enter into the Mestizo-like activities (com-

[4] In the tabulations which follow "Indian" includes responses recorded as *Indio*, *Indigena*, *Natural*, and Tarascan; "Mestizo" includes responses recorded as *Mesclado*, *Cruzado*, *de razon*, *Mestizo*, half and half, *revueltas*, and white.

10:Beals & Hatcher E-4,5 (1941-1942) 1943
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101 The village of Cherán is primarily an agricultural village, at an elevation of approximately 8500 feet, in the mountains between Pátz-
511 cuaro and Uruapan, Michoacán, México. The climate consequently is temperate. In comparison with other villages of the region, Cherán is relatively prosperous and it is probable that the diet is better than in the majority of Tarascan towns. In terms of Tarascan standards, probably only between ten and twenty percent of the population is to be classed as "poor". On the other hand, there are no markedly wealthy families.

Three methods of collecting data were used. One, followed pri-
126 marily by Sra. Rendón, was the collection of a complete list of foods eaten and the compilation of a large number of menus of actual meals for as many families as was possible. In addition, the entire staff collected recipes for specific dishes. These, although of ethnographic interest, were of little use in the present study. Finally, the cooperation of a number of literate families was enlisted to get a complete record
124 of the food consumed over a fifteen day period.

The final method naturally was the most valuable. Unfortunately, the number of cooperating families was small. Moreover, the accuracy of the returns probably varied considerably. In many cases, the amount of money spent was given rather than the quantity purchased but, as very detailed studies of prices had been made it was possible to equate prices and quantities with some accuracy. One considerable source of error is the amount of vegetables such as cabbage, greens, and so on gathered from gardens or from woods. In addition, a certain amount of fruit or "snacks", purchased in the market or from street vendors had to be estimated from knowledge of general habits. The most specific records covered only a period in the late Fall and do not take into account some slight seasonal variations in the diet. Despite all these deficiencies, the various types of data seem to point to the same general conclusions, and we believe that these are reasonably valid
146 if the specific results are viewed with proper reserve.
262 An average weekly diet for a Cherán adult is presented in table I.[2]

114 in 1941-1942. The study formed a part of the Program of Anthropological Investigations among the Tarascan Indians, a joint enterprise of the University of California, the Escuela Nacional de Antropología, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, and the Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas. Analysis of the data was made by the junior author, Evelyn Hatcher.

128 [2] In compiling the tables, the following sources were used: Chatfield and Adams, **Proximate Composition of American Food Materials**, United
113 States Department of Agriculture Circular N° 549, 1940: Chatfield and McLaughlin, **Proximate Composition of Fresh Fruits**, United States Depart-

10:Beals & Hatcher E-4,5 (1941-1942) 1943
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146 This table is an abstraction derived from all the different sources of information. It shows that the diet contains somewhat more than 262 minumum requirements of vitamins A and B1, slightly less than mi- 556 nimum requirements of vitamin C, and appreciable deficiency of vita- 511 min B_2, ample proteins, and nearly a 25 percent deficiency in calories.

Such an average diet obviously is not very meaningful in giving the extremes. Fortunately, the two best fifteen day schedules secured were respectively from one of the wealthiest families in town and from one of the poorest. Table 2 shows the analysis of the diet for one week of an adult belonging to the wealthiest family.

The results of table 2 show a number of interesting and important points. While the vitamin A intake is above the minimum requirements (although still far below optimum recommendations), virtually all the vitamin A comes from yellow maize. If white maize were to be consumed, the vitamin A intake would be dangerously reduced. When it [184] is remembered that in some sections of Michoacán, white maize is preferred, it is evident that if the diets are at all similar to those at Cherán, serious vitamin A deficiency must occur. This is almost certainly the case, as diets of most Tarascan and many rural Mexicans in the area are little different from those in Cherán. The wealthy diet shows an approach to the higher recommended quantities of vitamin B_1, but vitamin C does not quite reach the minimum, and vitamin B_2 is still only about half the minimum needed. The protein intake is quite high and the calory intake is slightly above the recommended minimum for moderately active males. Table 2 is arranged to emphasize the importance of maize in the diets of even the wealthy.

Turning to the diet for a very poor family, analyzed in table 3, the vitamin A intake is slightly above minimum requirements, although again the figures depend upon the use of yellow maize. Vitamin B_1 intake is well below minimum requirements, and is only about half of the recommended quantity. Vitamin C, on the other hand, shows up much better than in the wealthy diet, due to the greater use of chile. If this is typical of poor family diets, then the vitamin C intake of poorer people is almost twice the minimum requirements, although

128 ment of Agriculture Circular N° 50, Revised 1931; Stiebeling and Phipard, 113 **Diets of Families of Employed Wage Earners and Clerical Workers in Cities,** United States Department of Agriculture Circular N° 507, 1939; Daniel and Munsell, **Vitamin of Foods,** United States Department of Agriculture Miscellaneous Publication 275, 1937; Borsook, **Vitamins,** Viking Press, 1940; Booher and Hartzler, **The Vitamin B Content of Foods,** United States Department of Agriculture Technical Bulletin N° 707, 1939; and Fixen and Roscoe, **Table of Vitamin Contents,** Nutrition Abstracts and Reviews, 9, 795 (1940).

10:Beals & Hatcher E-4,5 (1941-1942) 1943
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still short of what is recommended by some authorities. With vitamin B_2, however, the deficiency again becomes marked. Protein intake is barely above the minimum, while less than two thirds the minimum number of calories is secured.

The figures given in these tables, and the difficulties which arose in securing them, point out serious problems in the development of an accurate measure of diets. As the junior author has remarked, "I don't believe any of the values I found, and I don't believe the results I got. The whole business consists of a series of estimates. The actual figures in the tables mean little, but the fact that, in spite of whatever contortions I put the data through, I came out with something similar, gives plausibility to the general results." The reasons for this situation lie only partly in the inadequacies of the data; even greater uncertainty results from the difficulty of applying the published results of vitamin assays directly to specific foods prepared in specific ways. Thus in the case of the crucial vitamin C values, which in poor diets is almost wholly derived from chile, the variation in the C content of different varieties, and the variable losses in cooking and storage of each of these varieties under specific conditions makes an accurate estimation very difficult. In the case of maize, there is apparently no information as to the effect of storage and preparation on the vitamin A and vitamin B_1 content. As Mills has pointed out, there is also a difference in the vitamin content of foods produced in different regions.[3] We have no way of knowing whether corn produced in Michoacán, for example, has the same vitamin content as the corns analyzed in the United States. Finally, one may raise the all important and hitherto completely unanswered question as to whether nutritional requirements are the same for all peoples.

Nevertheless, some suggestions emerge from the studies. First of all, it is clear that the basic field data must be collected with great accuracy and with refernce to specific foods. The work of Steggerda[4] in Yucatán, for example, could not be compared with the results in this paper simply because a large number of foods were lumped together, rendering any effort at vitamin analysis impossible. This also applies to general statements about the importance of individual foods to diets. Ralph Linton, for example, has recently suggested that the increased protein intake resulting from the domestication of the bean,

[3] Mills, C. A. "Climatic Effects on Growth and Development, with Particular Reference to the Effects of Tropical Residence" (American Anthropologist, 44: 1-13, 1942).

[4] Steggerda, Morris. "Maya Indians of Yucatán". Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 531.

10:Beals & Hatcher E-4,5 (1941-1942) 1943
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121 [114] made possible the dense populations necessary for developing the more advanced Middle American cultures.[5] Yet when we analyze actual intake of foods among a people who undoubtedly were part of the advanced culture groups, we find that the protein intake from beans [146] in a wealthy family is only 1.1 ounces per adult per week, and in a poor family 33 ounces per week, while the protein intake from maize is respectively 19.2 ounces and 12.1 ounces per week. It is true that the quality of protein may be a factor of significance, particularly with reference to presence or absence of amino acids, but again no very satisfactory data are available. Finally, it is evident that much more work must be done in determining the values of foods, particularly with respect to the vitamin content of foods grown in the Tarascan environment. There must be further studies of the effects of maize storage, chile drying, and the specific effects of Tarascan cookery methods upon specific foods, to mention but a few problems.

● 128 146 One additional method of checking the validity of the present results is possible. The vitamin picture does suggest certain clinical and sub-clinical deficiencies. Persons using white corn in this area should show a high incidence of night blindness, some xerothalmia among children, and retarded growth. The B-vitamin picture is everywhere low, markedly so among low income groups. Consequently, there is expectation of pellegra, lack of vitality, and digestive disorders such as constipation. Scurvy probably should occur at times if the results are more or less correct. All of these dire predictions could be checked by good medical field studies; if verified, the reliability of the present study would be considerably enhanced. The probability that vitamin B deficiencies affect vitality indicate the importance of further studies to determine possible influences on culture development or cultural participation.

146 As a final comment, the Cherán diet would be greatly improved by a shift in emphasis upon items already present. More whole wheat, bread, sweet potatoes, oranges, bananas, milk, tomatoes, meat and eggs, and less maize, would produce a distinctly better diet. Table 4 is a modification of the diet for a very poor family, showing what a great change would be produced by rather slight shifts which could be accomplished with little or no increase in cost. The increase in vitamin intake, however, would still leave a deficiency of the vitamins and reduce the calory intake still more.

262 435 Analysis of the costs of various diets reveals much more striking differences than are shown by the nutritive values. Data from one of

[5] Linton, Ralph. "Crops, Soils, and Culture in America" (in **The Maya and their Neighbors**, New York, 1940, pp. 32-40).

[text continues on p. 304]

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
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[P.6]

THE LEGENDS

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[128] The eight Tarascan legends have been arranged in their presumed historical sequence. The creation myth is followed by a
[173] legendary account of tribal wanderings until the beautiful and
[167] abundant land, Michoacán, was reached.

Next are four love stories explaining natural features of the
[175] countryside. The first of these belongs to the period of intertribal wars (1200-1400 A.D.) which eventually consolidated the empire. The second is a simple folk tale explaining the origin of an important spring. Rivalry between political and religious power may be perceived in the third. The fourth reflects palace intrigue and the problems of succession to the throne.

[648] The final two legends deal with the coming of the Spaniards. The first one prophesies their coming and the second presents a
[128] rationalization of the Conquest.

The legends are preceded by short notes which place them in historical perspective.

THE BIRTH OF CUERÓHPERI

Historical Comment

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[175] The Tarascans, like other cultured peoples of Mexico and Central America, had knowledge of the calendar. In the *Relación de Michoacán*, a work written probably in 1540-41 by an anonymous Franciscan priest, the names of fourteen of the eighteen Tarascan months of twenty days each are mentioned, and for four of the months the corresponding date in the Christian calendar is given (Caso, 1943).

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At the fiesta of *Uazcata cónscuaro* (on June 27,) the chief priest, dressed in full pompous regalia, related the history of the nation and its princes.

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
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The dream portion in the same legend reveals the nature of the Tarascan people's subsequent acceptance of the Conquest through the successful teachings of the Catholic church.

As literature, the legends are presented in language which seems remarkably artistic and urbane for the Tarascan's menial status and lack of education in modern Mexico. However, it should be remembered that from the beginning these stories had a direct religious association and the Petamuti undoubtedly demanded rather exact adherence to theoretical norms of oral literature by the neophyte who would succeed him as the bearer and guardian of folk tradition. The conditions of their annual telling at the fiesta of *Uazcata cónsecuaro* to the assembled tribe encouraged the priest to develop them into emotional, oral literature. Some of this pre-Conquest tendency has continued to the present time. Also, these legends have probably become embellished with illusions and atmospheric details by skilled narrators in historic times. This author-translator chose the most sophisticated and excitingly literary rendition available where a choice presented itself.

One of the most impressive facts about these legends, even to the non-analytical person, is the presentation of a "mood" and the changes in mood as the given story progresses. The narrator seems to live and to feel the story.

For some of these legends to have been preserved so well since the Spanish Conquest may reflect, to some extent, the relative isolation of Michoacán, but it seems more likely to indicate the importance these legends have had and still have in Tarascan life. In the present Tarascan area, nearly four hundred and fifty years of acculturation have obscured many traits of native provenience. Today's economic specialization and trade patterns are apparently based upon aboriginal conditions (West, 1948, p. 57), yet they are known to have been formalized by Europeans (Beals, 1946, p. 210). Nevertheless, the character of such things as marriage, family life, and the people's attitudes toward life's values—the real educative forces affecting the thinking and personality of Tarascans—appear to be relatively unchanged.

Despite the more recent modifications in material culture and social organization, the basic values woven into the early legends